

## **Books: 'How Children Become Violent'**

### **Early bonding critical for development**

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**By Mary Compton**

School and youth counselors will want to add "How Children Become Violent" by Kathryn Seifert to their collection of must reads.

A thorough book based on the author's 30 years of working in the mental health field, provides a real vision of the state of violence in youth today.

Some of Seifert's studies have come to conclusions many parents already know.

Exposure to media violence such as negative television shows, violent video games, peer pressure, along with the breakdown of the family, have contributed to stressors which cause disorders in young people.

Seifert's studies reinforce beliefs that a loving, nurturing relationship needs to be built in infancy or the child will suffer for the rest of his life.

It is through these early connections that children learn how to participate in relationships with others.

Seifert goes on to support her findings.

She says if severe and chronic emotional and physical neglect occur in the first five years of life, later problems such as anxiety, panic attacks, severe mood swings and explosive and violent behavior will surface.

Seifert briefly touches on the childhoods of killers such as Son of Sam, Ted Bundy and Charles Manson.

Each one suffered some type of loss or parental neglect as a small child.

She talks about cases she has worked on.

One child who was neglected by a drug addicted mother, left in his crib, hungry, crying and with a dirty diaper grew into adolescence with a sense of hopelessness.

The child later joined a gang and was killed. The story is the same, repeated over and over again, throughout the world on a daily basis.

Her study shows other children who start life similarly but make it to adulthood, often take with them attachment disorders and also severe psychosis.

Seifert provides more details along with resource contact information throughout the book.

There are millions of neglected, abandoned and abused children in this world who are calling out for help.

After reading this book, I am compelled to make a difference. One of the best quotes I read came from an educator, Larry Bell, who said, "Even on your worst day, you may be a child's only best hope."

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